

*Litchfield
Town Deliberative Session*

2:00 PM
January 30, 2010

Warrant Article 1

To elect by ballot the following Town officers:
two Selectmen-three year term; two Budget
Committee members-three year term; One
Trustee to Trust Fund-three year term; Two
Library Trustee-three year term; One Fire
Chief-three year term; One Checklist
Supervisor-Six year term;. One Cemetery
Trustee – one year term, One Cemetery
Trustee – two year term, One Cemetery
Trustee – three year term.

Warrant Article 2

Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 1 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Town of Litchfield Zoning Ordinance as follows?:

Adopt a new Section 475, Inclusionary Housing, to provide for the construction of workforce housing in order to comply with the Workforce Housing Statute, NH RSA 674:58-61. In order to reduce the cost of construction, workforce housing will be granted reductions in lot size, frontage, building setbacks, building area and adjacent road width. Provision is also made to ensure future affordability of workforce housing. Workforce housing will be permitted in the Residential Zone, with Multi-family (3-5+ units per building) being limited to north of Leach Brook.

This amendment has Planning Board approval.

Work Force Housing (Article 2)

- Purpose

- To Encourage The Construction of Homes That Will Be Affordable To Families Earning The Median Income Of The Region.

- NH RSA 674:58-61

- Work Force vs. Conventional Subdivisions

- Same Safety and Environmental Considerations
- Lot Sized Reduced
- 5+ Family Units Allowed North of Leach Brook and as accessory units in transitional zone
- Affordability Restriction (plan to be prepared by developer)

Warrant Article 3

Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 2 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Town of Litchfield Zoning Ordinance as follows?:

Adopt a new Section 575, Conservation Open Space Development, to require proposed residential subdivision developments 20 acres or greater in size to be designed to preserve natural features and wildlife habitat. This ordinance will permit reduced lot size, setbacks, and frontage, so that building lots take up less area allowing equal building lot density as a conventional development while preserving open space. Open space will be owned and/or managed by the Town, land trust or association utilizing a conservation easement.

This amendment has Planning Board approval.

Conservation Open Space Subdivisions (Article 3)

- Purpose
 - To Conserve Open Space Within Residential Neighborhoods While Permitting An Equal Number Of Homes As A Conventional Subdivision To Be Constructed.
- Open Space vs. Conventional Subdivisions
 - Lot Requirements
 - Yield Plan
 - Reduced Lot Size
 - Setbacks
 - Accessed from Interior Road Network
 - Maintenance Of Open Space (3 Options)
 - Neighborhood Association
 - Third Party Conservation Group
 - Town

Warrant Article 4

To see if the town will raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriation by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth in the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling \$4,387,436. Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$4,372,742, which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the town of Litchfield or by Law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA §40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only.

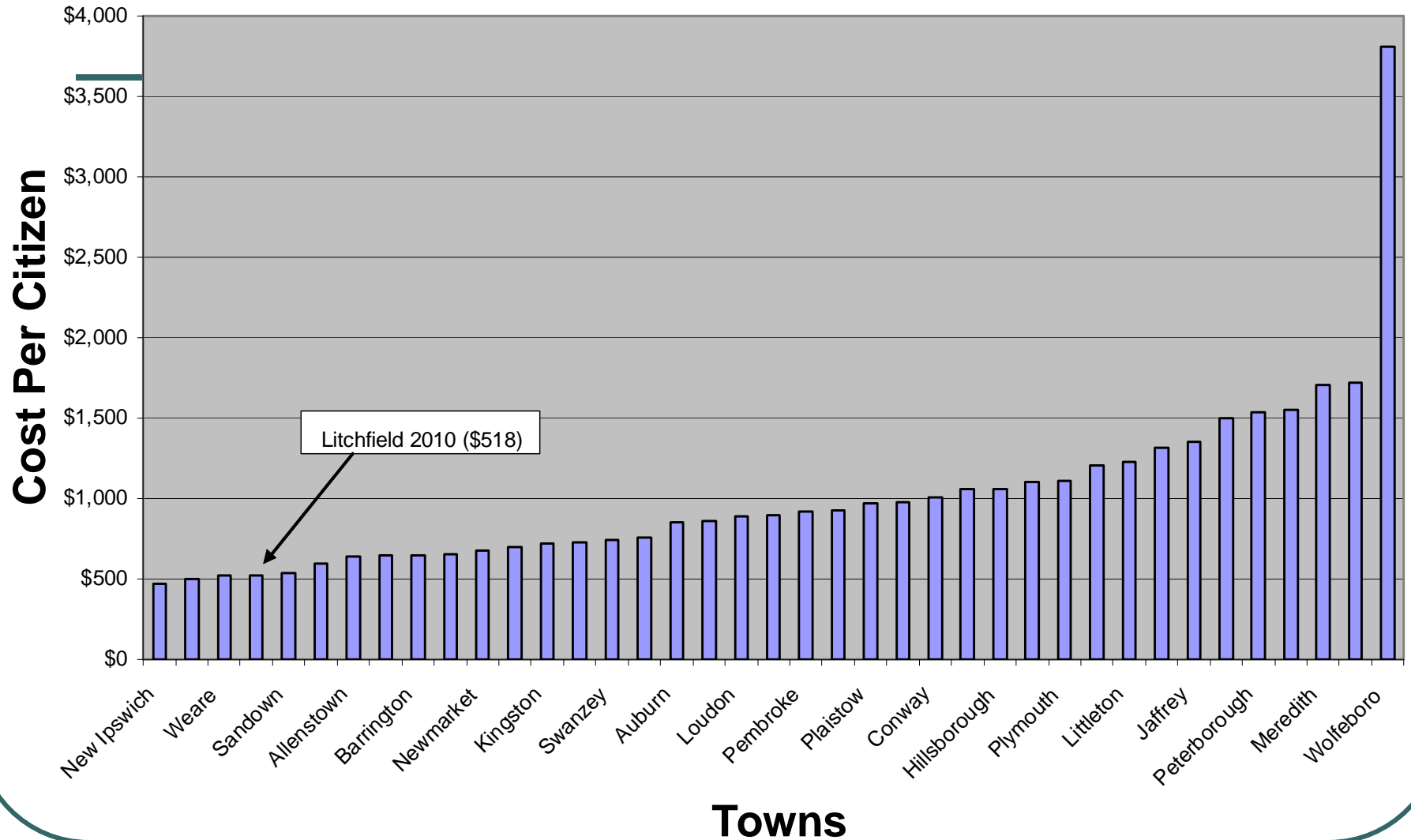
Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (Vote: 4-0-0)

Recommended by the Budget Committee (Vote: 7-1-0)

Budget Committee's 2010 Proposal

- Most departments remain relatively the same in spending;
- Exceptions:
 - Incinerator shutdown \$162,580;
 - Road Maintenance from Highway Block Grant Fund;
 - Auditing Cost increased to \$18,500;
 - Healthcare costs and retirement increases;
- Total town budget increase \$33,339 over 2009 default budget

2009 Cost per Citizen vs. Litchfield 2010



Warrant Article 5

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$58,100 to hire a Town Administrator effective July 5, 2010. The cost of the period for July 5, 2010 until December 31, 2010 will be \$58,100 of which \$42,500 represents salary and \$15,600 represents benefits. The annual cost of this position will be \$116,200 of which \$85,000 represents salary and \$31,200 represents benefits. This position shall have an annual salary not to exceed \$85,000 per year.

This position will provide day to day management of the town's government as delegated by the Board of Selectmen. It is the intention of this position to ensure that the operations of the town's governmental organizations are conducted in a cost effective, coordinated and timely manner. This position differs from the Board of Selectmen Office Manager in that the position encompasses responsibilities for department operations beyond the financial accounting and organization of the Selectmen's office. Town functions such as Highway, Solid Waste, Police, Code Enforcement and Building will report to this individual for day to day operations.

Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (Vote: 5-0-0)

Recommended by the Budget Committee (Vote 5-3-0)

Leadership of the Town

- Leadership of the town of Litchfield has become a full time need;
- As in any business, the town need leadership;
 - Accessible;
 - Responsive;
 - Knowledgeable;

Administrator vs. Manager

- Administrator is delegated responsibility by the Board of Selectmen;
 - May include any responsibilities;
 - Administrator is an employee of the town;
- Manager is given responsibility by State Law (NH RSA § 37:6);
 - Creates a new form of government for the town;
 - Manager is a town officer appointed by the Selectmen;
 - Removes responsibilities from the Selectmen;
 - Must be appointed with "... special reference to his education, training, and experience to perform the duties of his office ..."

Administrator vs. Office Manager

- Town Administrator handles:

- Implementation of the policies of the Board of Selectmen;
- Drafts and presents town policies and procedures;
- Ensures overall town compliance with budget;
- Budget analysis;
- Negotiation of contracts and service agreements;
- Resolves interdepartmental conflicts;
- Personnel management;
- Legal opinion investigation;

- Office Manager handles:

- Functioning of BOS office;
- Process assessments, abatements & exemptions;
- Maintains Selectmen's ledgers as a cross check on Treasurer;
- Payroll for town employees;
- Accounts payable for the town;
- Clerical support for Building and Highway Departments;
- Citizen questions & complaints;
- Maintains tax maps;

Everyday Town Business

- Respond to citizen issues;
 - Complaints;
 - Tax questions;
 - Use of town property;
- Legal issues with town counsel;
- Police matters;
- Personnel Issues;
- Town finances;

Why can't we just let every department do what they want?

- Departments are interconnected. Examples;
 - Eastern Equine Encephalitis, H1N1 virus, “turf”;
 - Budgets (Ensuring the town stays w/in overall budget);
 - Selectmen's office/Tax Collector/Treasurer;
- Department heads request consultation to align themselves with the town policies & practices;
 - Department heads need to “share” the risks;
- Department heads have varying degrees of management or government (RSA) skills;
 - Many are newly appointed or elected and rely on the BOS for guidance;
- Department heads often lack an understanding of how the decisions fit into or impact the overall town;
 - The “big picture”;

Benefits to Litchfield

- Will provide the town:
 - Financial oversight with the Selectmen;
 - Provide for immediate response to the needs of the department heads, the town and citizens;
 - Will improved town government through the establishment of systems and procedures long needed in Litchfield;
 - Revamping & maintaining of the personnel policy manual;
 - Establishment of town financial policies;
 - Purchasing policy;
 - Consolidation of vendors & creditors;
 - Routine third party oversight of financial documents (ex. Seymour);
 - Negotiation of contracts and service agreements;
 - Control and inventory of town property;
 - Establishment of a town “operational plan” for the controlled development of government across departments;
 - Logical allocation of scarce resources;

Warrant Article 6

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$5,000 as a stipend to hire one (1) Welfare Administrator who shall have the responsibility under the supervision of the Board of Selectmen for the administration of the town's welfare program as specified under RSA § 165:1.

This position will be responsible for the administration of the town's welfare program currently administered by the Board of Selectmen. This position will be responsible for managing the welfare budget, accepting welfare applications, reviewing the applications for eligibility to receive welfare and to provide aid to those qualified applicants. This position will report to the Board of Selectmen who shall with the Welfare Administrator set welfare standards and policies for the town.

Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (Vote 3-1-1)
Recommended by the Budget Committee (Vote 6-2-0)

Welfare Administrator

- Knowledge
 - Welfare law is a complex subject;
 - Requires extensive knowledge of requirements;
- Liability
 - Failure on the part of the town to provide coverage leaves the town open to action;
 - Strict liability for confidentiality and accuracy;
- Availability
 - Time limits are imposed on handling the cases;
 - Availability of Administrator, applicant and suppliers are critical

Welfare Administrator Options

- Provide a stipend for
 - Designated citizen to cover the function;
 - Hiring of an outside administrator to be split between several towns;

Warrant Article 7

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the amount of \$1,395 for the formation and initial budget of an Ethics Committee and to rescind the existing Conflict of Interest Law, and adopt in lieu thereof a new Code of Ethics as written by the Litchfield Code of Ethics Formation Committee. Copies of the proposed Code of Ethics may be obtained at Town Clerks Office, and at the Aaron Cutler Memorial Library.

This warrant will establish an Ethics Committee whose charter is to impartially investigate citizen complaints of potential ethical conflict by town officials, volunteers and committee members and to bring their findings to the Board of Selectmen for resolution. The proposed ethics policy is based upon a policy currently in use in the town of Dunbarton. Enactment of this article will provide a means for Litchfield's citizens to resolve perceived or real ethical concerns with town government. Neither this article nor the Ethics Policy includes the School Government within its scope.

Not Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (Vote 3-2-0)

Recommended by the Budget Committee (Vote 5-2-0) The Budget Committee's recommendation relates only to the appropriation request for this article, and express no opinion on the merits of the included Ethics Policy.

Warrant Article 8

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$24,871.06 to hire one (1) full time police officer effective July 11, 2010. The cost for the period of July 11, 2010 through December 31, 2010 is \$24,871.06, of which \$17,386.00 is for salary and \$7,485.06 is for benefits and equipment. The annual cost of said officer will be \$49,633.51 of which \$37,663.39 will be for salary and \$11,970.12 will be for benefits and equipment.

The hiring of a full time police officer will provide for additional coverage ensuring that there are always two (2) officers on duty at all times. Presently, Litchfield has only one (1) officer on duty approximately 35% of the time. This additional officer is in concurrence with the 2008 Municipal Resources Institute (MRI) report that recommended an additional two (2) officers be added to the force. This additional officer will provide for increased citizen and officer safety.

Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (Vote 5-0-0)

Recommended by the Budget Committee (Vote 6-2-0)

Why more Officers?

- This will give Litchfield 2 man/24 hour coverage.
 - Sufficient police staffing is essential for crime deterrence and officer safety.
- My proposal follows the Municipal Resources Inc. recommendation that was conducted January 2008.

What is the MRI Report

- This was an in depth report (142 pages) completed in January 2008. The company that conducted this independent study is a renowned authority on police procedures and practices.
- This report is a “Blue Print” for the police department and after considerable research of our calls for service and availability recommended additional officers.

MRI Report

- We have not added to the patrol division in several years. The population however has more than doubled.
- This is not a want but a need. This addition will increase public safety and officer safety.
- There have been times when we had to call the Londonderry or the Hudson Police Departments and they have not been able to assist because they were also short-handed or busy with calls of their own. This causes greater risk for not only the Litchfield citizens but also the Litchfield officers in these situation.

Municipal Resources Inc. Study Findings

Recommended Staffing for the LPD

Position	Present	End of 2008	2009	2010
Chief	1	1	1	1
Lieutenant	1	1	1	1
Sergeant	2	2	2	2
Full time Officers	6	7	8	9
Prosecutor	1 (non L.E.)	1	1	1
Full time Dispatcher	2	2	3	3
Animal Control Officer	1	2	2	2

MRI Study Results

- By the beginning of 2009
 - The LPD should have:
 - 8 full time officers and 2 Sergeants
 - We currently have 6 officers and 2 Sergeants
- By the end of 2010
 - The LPD should have:
 - 9 full time officers and 2 Sergeants

Full Report-

http://litchfieldpd.com/lpd_only/media/documents/MRI.pdf

Are we adequately protected ?

- The statistics show in **2009** the following coverage :
 - The town had no police officer immediately available to respond to calls for **720 Hours** throughout the year or **30 Full Days out of the year** due to single officer coverage.

What was the officer doing ?

- During the hours that we had single police officer coverage he was:
 - **1037** Times he was dispatched to calls for service by himself.
 - **49** Times he made arrests by himself
 - **253** Times he was tied up with motor vehicle violations
 - **593** Times he was tied up with service calls at the police station

What Happens if the Officer is on another call or arrest ?

- We have to depend on Mutual Aid from Londonderry and Hudson Police Dept's

OR

- The call must wait until we have an officer available.

OR

- The officer must decide which call is “more important” and respond accordingly.

How are we in comparison to similar towns ?

Town	Population	F/T	Per 1000
Litchfield	8200	10	1.2
Belmont	7100	13	1.8
Bow	8000	15	1.9
Hanover	8500	19	2.2
Hollis	7700	15	2.0
Plaistow	7600	16	2.1

Average Staffing is 14 F/T, 1.9 Per 1000 pop.

- To bring Litchfield to the average we would need 16 F/T officers. We are asking for 1 officer.

How do we compare to smaller communities ?

● Town	Pop	F/T	Per 1000
Litchfield	8200	10	1.2
Allenstown	4900	11	2.2
Alton	5000	10	2.0
Littleton	4600	13	2.8
Jaffrey	2900	12	4.1
Peterborough	3000	11	3.6

Average officers are 11 F/T, 2.6 Per 1000 pop.

- Litchfield has drastically dropped behind the ratio of officers to population even when compared to smaller communities.

Warrant Article 9

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the amount of \$50,000.00 for the purchase a 1998 Freightliner FL70 Medium Duty Rescue Truck from the Town of Londonderry. This appropriation shall be non-lapsing per RSA § 32:7, VI, and will not lapse until the vehicle has been purchased or December 31, 2011.

This truck with approximately 12,000 miles includes an on-spot tire chain system, 16 foot non-walk-in rescue body constructed of non-corroding lightweight ABS and 9 large size walk around storage compartments. Included in the purchase are a 15,000 lb. front bumper WARN winch, 5,700 watt on board diesel powered generator, Quartz scene work lights, emergency warning lights, siren, (2) 100 foot hydraulic hose reels for auto extrication equipment and a 4-bottle, 6,000 PSI high pressure breathing air recharge system capable of refilling approximately 45 firefighting SCBA Air Packs. Purchase of this vehicle will defer the purchase of a replacement, full sized fire truck for approximately 3 to 5 years providing anticipated savings of approximately \$180,000 to \$300,000 over that time period in purchase payments and by saving wear and tear on existing full size fire vehicles responding to incidents.

Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (Vote 4-1-0)

Recommended by the Budget Committee (Vote 8-0-0)

Londonderry Rescue-1



Truck Chassis

- 1998 Freightliner FL70 Commercial cab.
- Seats (3)
- Caterpillar 3126 diesel motor (230 HP)
- Allison Automatic Transmission
- Airbrakes
- 45 gallon fuel tank
- Weighs 28,000 lbs

- 12,000 road miles = 1,000 miles per year!

Rescue Truck Overview

- Currently in-service in Town of Londonderry, NH.
- Truck is being replaced with a new (larger sized) rescue truck. Current truck does not have enough capacity for Londonderry's needs and is on their 10 year replacement program.

Rescue Truck Overview

- The 1998 Freightliner has required no major repairs, had no break-downs or defects.
- The truck has very low road miles (12,000) and no fire pump which cuts down on the wear & tear to the motor.
- Truck has had only routine maintenance performed on it.

Truck Body



- 16 foot non-walk in rescue body constructed of ABS plastic.
- ABS plastic will not dent, chip, rust and takes a heavy impact to crack.
- Any damage resulting in cracking is easily repaired at the manufacturers NH facility.
- The truck body was built locally in Bradford, NH at Valley Fire Equipment.

15,000 LB Winch







1

2

3

4

Air Bottle Refill Compartment

3

: ½ depth Air Cascade & Air Bottle Compartment.

- (4) 6,000 PSI air bottles capable of filling approx. 45 air-packs.
- Extra Storage for:
- (6) spare air-pack bottles and (2) air-packs.





Warrant Article 10

Shall the town vote to approve the cost items for wage and related costs that have been included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Town of Litchfield and Council 93 of the American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees which provide for the following increases in wages and benefits;

2010

\$24,312.28

And further, to raise and appropriate the sum of \$24,312.28 for the 2010 fiscal year, such sum representing the additional cost attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits over those of the appropriation at the current staffing levels, paid in the prior fiscal year. This collective bargaining agreement covers full and part time patrol officers and full and part time dispatchers.

This contract establishes a new base salary for the bargaining officers and dispatchers that are representative of rates paid by the surrounding communities. The bargaining unit has agreed to defer any wage increases for 2008 and 2009 represented by cost of living adjustments. Further, the bargaining unit has agreed to this as being a one (1) year contract with a salary adjustment thus avoiding the evergreen clause. Benefits to the bargaining unit include the addition of a holiday to match the town non-bargaining group, accelerated vesting of vacations and various additions to pay for a night shift premium, the addition of minimum hours of pay for cancelled details (chargeable against the contractor and not paid by the town) and a premium for Field Training Officer premium.

Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (Vote 5-0-0)

Recommended by the Budget Committee (Vote 6-2-0)

Contract History

- **Current contract expired April 2007;**
 - 2010 begins the third year without a contract;
 - Terms of the expired contract continue in effect today;
 - Step increases provided as agreed under the expired contract;
 - Bargaining unit has not had a COLA since the contract expired;
 - Town is obligated to negotiate with the bargaining unit until a new contract is established;
 - Expenses of contract negotiation would continue;

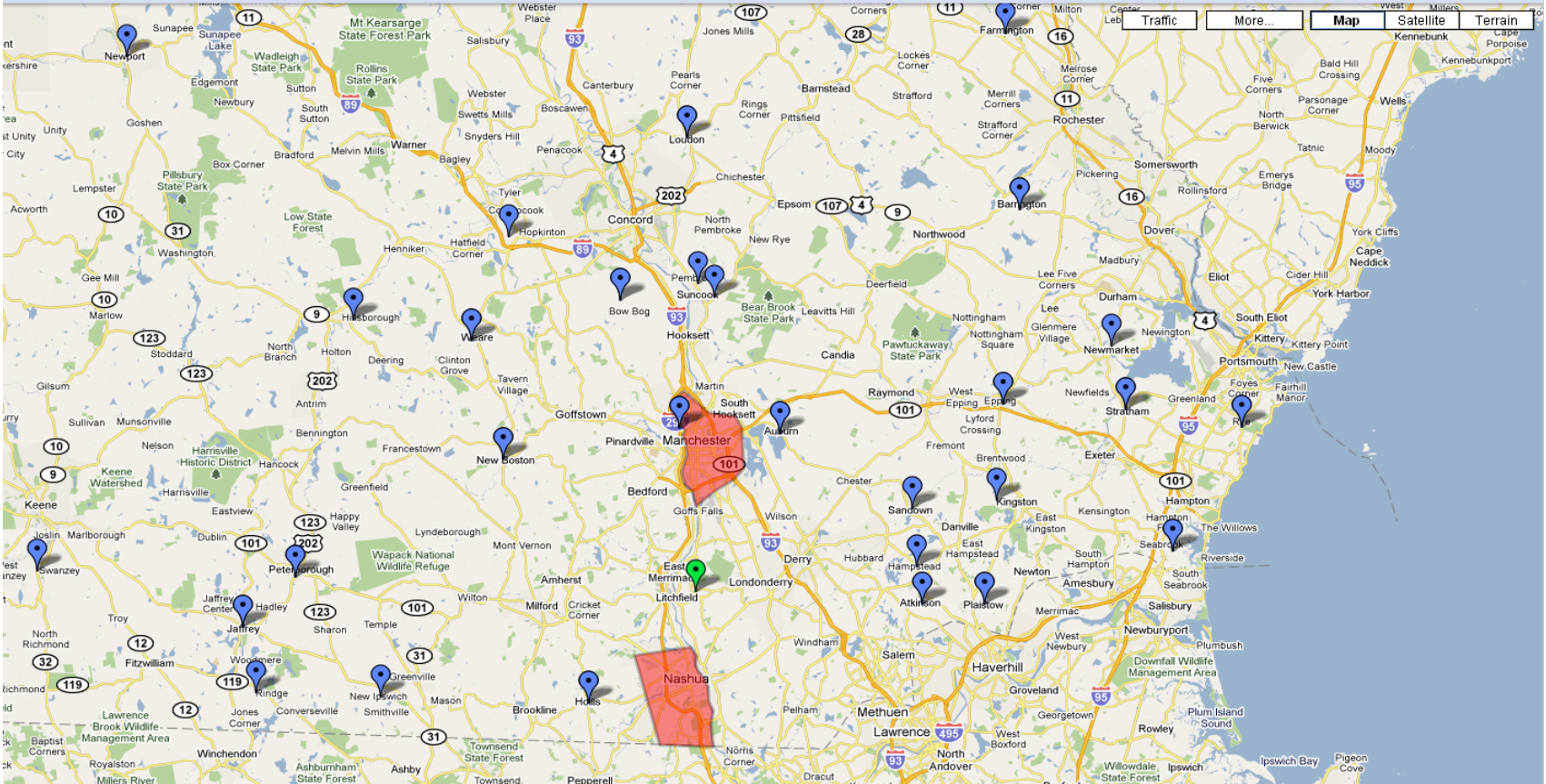
Provisions to Union

- Provides for a 1 year contract between the town and the union;
- Adjusts officers salary;
 - To the average of surrounding communities with whom we compete for staff;
 - Uses two adjustment dates (4/1 and 9/1) for full time employees;
 - Uses one adjustment date (9/1) for part time employees;
- Bargaining unit forgoes any salary for prior two years without a contract;
- Provides for a night shift premium of \$0.50/hour;
- More notice for detail cancellation (Paid by Contractor);
- One day of vacation added to match the non-bargaining town employees;
 - Vacations vest in 15 years rather than 20 years;

Benefits to the Town

- Contract does not initiate an “evergreen” clause;
- Contract locks salaries in place without future:
 - Steps increases;
 - COLA's;
- Eliminates future negotiations on salaries from the past two years without a contract;
- Life insurance and Health insurance costs decrease;
- Chief can control overtime/details to control the 125% retirement limit;
- Chief can require drug testing for cause;

Salary



- Litchfield is surrounded by the two largest cities in NH;
- We competes against these towns/cities for our officers;
 - Job of patrol officers in surrounding towns are the same;
 - Londonderry's new contract proposes salary after one year of \$55,632.

Salaries of Area Towns

		Start	Step 1/Cert	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Max. PT	MPO	SGT
Derry	Hourly		\$21.76	\$23.52	\$24.61	\$26.82	\$26.82	\$28.16	\$34.20
	Annual		\$45,260.80	\$48,921.60	\$51,188.80	\$55,785.60	\$55,785.60	\$58,572.80	\$71,136.00
Hudson	Hourly	\$20.98	\$22.02	\$23.09	\$24.13	\$25.18	\$28.34	\$29.76	\$32.20
	Annual	\$43,638.40	\$45,801.60	\$48,027.20	\$50,190.40	\$52,374.40	\$58,947.20	\$61,900.80	\$66,976.00
Londonderry	Hourly		\$21.58	\$25.97	\$27.27	\$28.63	\$28.63	\$29.78	\$31.43
	Annual		\$44,896.33	\$54,012.45	\$56,712.71	\$59,554.98	\$59,554.98	\$61,942.40	\$65,374.40
Manchester	Hourly		\$20.57	\$21.19	\$21.83	\$22.48	\$29.34		
	Annual		\$42,777.66	\$44,060.99	\$45,382.81	\$46,744.29	\$60,990.71		
Merrimack steps/6mos	Hourly	\$22.45	\$24.28	\$26.26	\$26.79		\$26.79	\$27.92	\$30.60
	Annual	\$46,696.00	\$50,502.40	\$54,620.80	\$55,723.20		\$55,723.20	\$58,073.60	\$63,648.00
Litchfield	Hourly	\$18.11	\$19.21	\$19.79	\$20.37	\$20.98	\$24.63	\$25.85	\$29.60
	Annual	\$37,668.80	\$39,956.80	\$41,163.20	\$42,396.60	\$43,638.40	\$51,230.40	\$53,768	\$61,568

Adjustments

April 1, 2010		< 6 Months	6 Months	1 year	2 years	3 years	4+ years
FT	Dispatchers	\$15.04	\$15.74	\$16.45	\$17.22	\$18.01	\$18.86
	Patrolman	\$19.80	\$20.68	\$21.32	\$22.08	\$22.88	\$24.87
	MPO						\$26.89
	Corporal						\$28.86
	SGT						\$30.95
September 1, 2010							
FT	Dispatchers	\$15.47	\$16.40	\$17.38	\$18.42	\$19.52	\$20.69
	Patrolman	\$21.49	\$22.15	\$22.84	\$23.78	\$24.78	\$25.82
	MPO						\$27.92
	Corporal						\$30.04
	SGT						\$32.30
PT	Dispatchers						
	Patrolman	\$18.02	\$18.58	\$19.15	\$19.74	\$20.36	\$20.99
	MPO						\$21.64
	Corporal						\$22.31
	SGT						

Bottom Line

- For approx. \$60K (total 2011 add'l cost);
 - the citizens can lock down future spending on Bargaining unit salaries until economic conditions are favorable;
 - Eliminate consideration of back pay for 2007 to 2010;
 - Valued at ~\$22,000;
 - Bringing officers up to a competitive salary with surrounding communities;
 - The retention of officers reduces new officer training costs;

Warrant Article 11

Shall we modify the elderly exemption from property tax in the Town of Litchfield, based on assessed value, for qualified taxpayers, to the following: for a person 65 years of age up to 75 years of age, \$50,000; for a person 75 years of age up to 80 years of age, \$80,000; for persons 80 years of age and above, \$125,000. To qualify, the person must have been a New Hampshire resident for at least 3 consecutive years, own the real estate individually or jointly, or if the real estate is owned by such person's spouse, they must have been married to each other for at least 5 consecutive years. In addition, the taxpayer must have a net income in each applicable age group of not more than \$30,000 if single or not more than \$45,000 if married; and own net assets not in excess of \$300,000 excluding the value of the person's residence.

This article seeks to clarify the town's existing exemptions as submitted by petition warrant article in 2004 and partially denied by the Department of Revenue Administration. The findings of the NH Department of Revenue Administration on the petition warrant article approved by the voters in 2004 pointed out several errors with the petitioned age categories as well as years of residence and marriage status. This warrant article does not change the exemption levels but only seeks to create compliance with state law in the areas found deficient by NHDRA.

Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (Vote 5-0-0)

Background

- In 2004 a petition warrant article was submitted for elderly exemptions;
 - Petition article passed on ballot vote;
 - NH Department of Revenue Administration (DRA) found sections of the warrant in conflict with state law;
 - DRA “voided” parts of the warrant;
- This article brings into compliance those sections found invalid by DRA
 - Clarifies age categories;
 - Clarifies number of years of residency required;
 - Both residents of home had to be age 65;
 - No changes to amounts currently granted;
 - Resolution requested by DRA in 2004;

Warrant Article 12

To see if the town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to enter into negotiations with Pennichuck East Utilities for the town to assume responsibility for the subscribers costs for the Fire Protection surcharge. The results of these negotiations will be brought back to the voters in March of 2011 for consideration.

Currently, Pennichuck East Utilities charges subscribers a monthly fee to cover the cost of installation and maintenance for fire hydrant installation. This cost, currently assessed to all subscribers, would be assumed by the town if passed in 2011 and amounts to approximately \$269,000 per year at the present time. The purpose of this warrant article is to see if the town will authorize the Selectmen to negotiate this charge with the intention that the town will assume the cost of the Fire Protection surcharge through an assessment to be contained as part of the property tax. Prior to assuming these charges, the results of the negotiations will be brought back to the town meeting for consideration on the 2011 warrant.

Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (Vote 3-1-1)

Background

- Currently per the NH Public Utilities Commission (PUC);
 - If Litchfield Fire Department uses a hydrant;
 - Any home who is not subscribed to Pennichuck East Utilities (PEU) water must pay \$800 for the hydrant/water usage to Pennichuck;
 - PEU will then distribute to the subscribers the apportioned share of the \$800;
 - Subscribers pay a per month fee for the hydrant composed of capital depreciation costs and hydrant maintenance costs;
 - To date, no non-subscriber has been charged the \$800 Fire fee;
 - This warrant article asks if the voters wish the Selectmen to explore assumption of the cost town-wide for the hydrant service fee;
 - Cost to the town would be approximately \$269,000 per year;

Petition Warrant Article 13

By petition:

To see if the Town will vote to approve the following resolution to be forwarded to our State Representative(s), our State Senator, the Speaker of the House, and the Senate President. Resolved: The citizens of New Hampshire should be allowed to vote on an amendment to the New Hampshire Constitution that defines “marriage”.

Petition Warrant Article 14

By Petition:

“Shall Litchfield, NH adopt the provisions of RSA 40:14-b to delegate the determination of the default budget to the municipal budget committee which has been adopted under RSA 32:14?”

Passage of this article requires a 3/5 majority.

Not Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (Vote 4-0-0)

Recommended by the Budget Committee (5-3-0)

Selectmen Concerns

- Eliminates any checks and balances between BC and BOS in budget preparation;
 - Places ALL budgeting decisions into the hands of one group;
 - Eliminates significant BOS input & ownership in the budget process;
 - Blinds the public to errors in the budget preparation;
- BC acknowledges a limited understanding of town operations (reference 2005 School deliberative BC Chair);
 - While the BOS is required to provide data, there is no requirement that the BC use or consider it;
 - Nor is there a requirement for the BC to consult the BOS;

Goffstown News In Your Neighborhood

DECEMBER 17, 2009

NEWS OF GOFFSTOWN, NEW BOSTON, DUNBARTON, WEARE, BOW & HOPKINTON

VOL. 53, NO. 11

20 PAGES

Call Me about NEW
Elliott Tax Credit!

Call
Dan Croteau
Office: 647-8000
NHsynergy.com

MAX SYNERGY

► Goffstown

Department budget cuts scaled back

BY DAN O'BRIEN

danobrien155@hotmail.com

The Goffstown Budget Committee has tentatively scaled back drastic reductions it proposed to the police, fire and Public Works departments for next year's budget.

Early this month, the Budget Committee voted to make

5.6 percent reductions each to police, fire and Public Works after receiving the selectmen's version of the budget.

That meant a \$225,000 reduction for police, \$127,000 reduction for fire, and a \$266,000 reduction for the Department of Public Works.

However, after a standing-room-only meeting Dec. 8 with

warnings of drastic reductions or eliminations of services by the three department heads, the Budget Committee scaled back the budget reductions Dec. 10. Police funding will now only be reduced by \$20,000, fire by \$22,000, and Public Works by \$70,700.

Before funding was restored, the police chief

threatened to lay off four police officers, school crossing guards and the animal control officer. The fire chief said he'd stop funding overtime, resulting in fire station closures while the DPW threatened to scale back snowplowing, among other services.

Officials said about 90 percent of Fire Department

costs and 80 percent of Police Department costs are personnel related, many of which are due to contracts after labor negotiations.

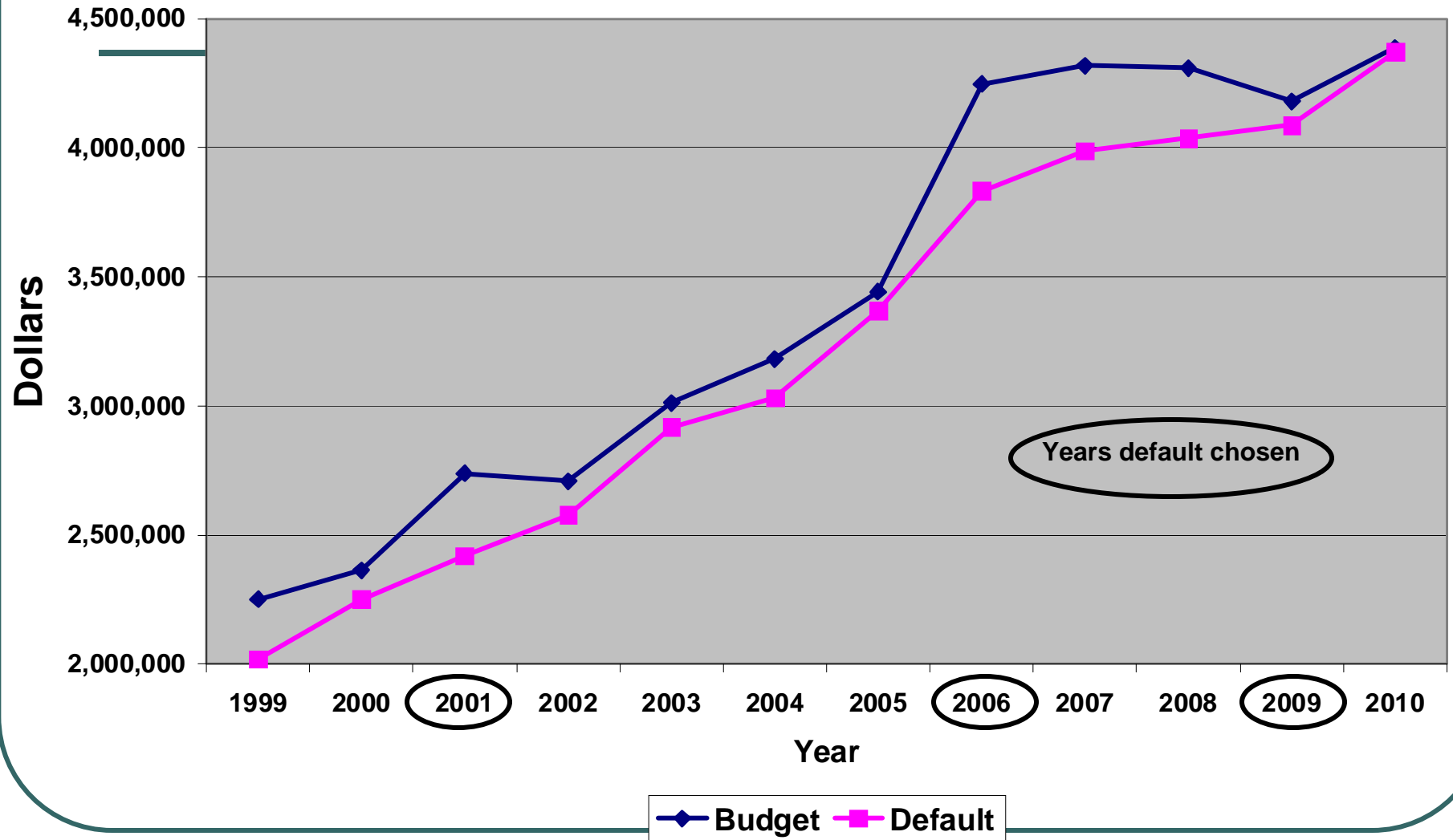
The Budget Committee has all but finalized its budget to \$144,537 less than the one selectmen approved, totaling

Please see BUDGET page A-10

Selectmen Concerns (cont)

- Improperly prepared budget may leave the BOS with no option but to eliminate services;
 - The ability of citizens to compare budget vs. default from independent sources is key;
- The Board of Selectmen has NEVER had a default budget higher than a proposed budget;
 - BOS has never placed items into the default budget to get them through the system;
- Budget Committee barely completes budget assembly today without having to address the default budget preparation for both the Town and the School:
 - All town proposals were submitted on schedule;
 - For 2010 budget, BC had to go to double sessions;
- This petition represents a solution looking for a problem;

Budget vs. Default



Final Thoughts

Based upon history, there is no benefit to the voters of Litchfield through this petition;

- Enactment of the warrant article contains some risks to the voters;
 - Limited or no BOS input;
 - No ability to compare;
 - Limits BC time to review SAU/Town budgets even further;
- Voters are best prepared to make decisions when presented with information from multiple sources for comparison;
 - This warrant will eliminate that additional information source;
- The petition warrant addresses a problem that does not exist;

Selectmen's Response to the 2009 Warrant Article 15

As amended: “To see if the town will vote to direct the Board of Selectmen to investigate the adoption of the provision of NH RSA 79 F(Taxation of Farm Structure and Land Under Farm Structures), to encourage the reservation[sic] of productive farms and associated structures and prevent the loss of farms and their associate structures due to property taxation at values incompatible with their usage and to report back to the 2010 Town Meeting.”

Selectmen's Response

- Petition warrant article was amended at the town's deliberative session
- Directed BOS to evaluate the impact;
 - Sent to Avitar for evaluation;
 - Worst case, town would lose \$69,300 in taxable value but building value would likely increase;
 - Avitar sees limited benefit to the town or to the property owner;